

3.1

The Fragment

A **sentence fragment** is a group of words that lacks a complete thought and is therefore an incomplete sentence.

Here are some common types of sentence fragments. The fragment is underlined:

Prepositional phrase fragment: Vinny was very fatigued. After his sixteen-mile race.

Participle phrase fragment: The children were very happy. Walking to school on the first day of class this year.


Infinitive phrase fragment: To win the first prize in the motor-building contest. That was my brother's goal.

Appositive phrase fragment: Our team visited Yankee Stadium. The baseball field located in New York City.

Clause fragment: You would be very surprised. If you saw how much your little cousin has grown this year.

Three of the following groups of words are fragments or portions of a complete sentence. Circle the fragments.

1. After the meal was finished.
2. Because he was so tall, Izzy always sat in the last seat in the row.
3. Once the couple had inspected at least sixty homes in that town.
4. Mr. Thompson, a great English teacher, passed away several years ago.
5. Have you ever visited Connecticut? The Nutmeg State.
6. Roy and Estella will be married at the end of the month.

 **WRITING TIP** Reading your group of words aloud should help to eliminate any fragment problem. Check that your group of words has a subject and a verb. Let your ear be your gear! "In the middle of the movie," a fragment, does not sound as if it is a complete idea. Yet, "In the middle of the movie, I fell asleep," does! This second group of words is a complete sentence, not a fragment.

Half a Score for Each (The Fragment)

3.1A

Ten of the following groups of words are sentences, and ten are fragments. Write S for sentence and F for fragment on the line next to each group of words.

1. Walking down by the mall.

2. The group members were walking down by the mall.

3. Over the river and through the woods.

4. Returning the money to someone who used the ATM.

5. It could not have come at a better time.

6. The fire was started.

7. The fire was started by lightning.

8. Drive the ball far, Karen.

9. With money left to spend at the other stores.

10. Chosen by the coaches to start the season at running back.

11. And nearly drowned.

12. Some cities are focusing on solving crimes that were committed over a year ago.

13. Catching two hours of the state's best dance entertainment.

14. Grabbing life by the horns, Jeff.

15. She was stretching before the start of the race.

16. If you want to be a great musician, you must practice often.

17. Could be the easiest way to find a solution.

18. So many books, so little time.

19. He can eat several large sandwiches at one sitting.

20. Do you think that this group of words is truly a sentence?